

# **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Report of the Scrutiny Review Group

**NHP - CASE STUDY OF  
PUBLIC REALM MAINTENANCE  
AREAS 2&3**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This report has been compiled by the members named of the review group. The views expressed are solely theirs.

### Membership

Councillor Alan Blann (Lead Member)  
Councillor Ann Groves  
Councillor Vina Mithani

Mr B Archer – Wealdstone Active Community  
Mr P Kehoe/Mr J Dawson – Bridgen Enterprises Ltd  
Mrs P Gershon

# 1. CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In summer 2003, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of the New Harrow Project (NHP) Public Realm Maintenance (PRM) Pilot project in South Harrow. That report, which recommended the phased roll out of the pilot, was presented to the meeting of the New Harrow Panel held in July 2003 and was welcomed by the Executive as a helpful and constructive study.
- 1.2 This report has been undertaken as a case study to the overall review of the NHP being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and aims to follow-up our review of the South Harrow pilot and to examine the roll out of PRM to Areas 2 and 3. We hope that this report and its findings will prove equally helpful to the Council and would urge you to consider this report in conjunction with the report on the overall review of the NHP. Whilst the latter deals with broader issues, there are a number of overlapping areas, some of which are addressed within the main report.
- 1.3 Our original intention had been to submit an interim report to the Executive for consideration in conjunction with the officer report on the further PRM roll-out of the NHP. However, our own planned work programme precluded us from meeting the subsequently accelerated timetable for deciding on the further roll-out of the project, leading to our decision to focus our attention solely on producing this final report of our case study.
- 1.4 This change to our plans allowed us to secure the involvement of community and business representatives on our review group, whose independent contributions have proved invaluable. Without doubt, our deliberations have been greatly enhanced by their input, for which we are most grateful. We hope that this joint working can be developed in our future work, the involvement of the local community being one of the keys strengths of scrutiny.

Alan Blann

Chair of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Sub-Committee  
Leader of the Case Study

## 2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Based on evidence to date, we consider that the roll out of the PRM South Harrow pilot has been undertaken successfully without detriment to the standards in the pilot area. Our own experiences, confirmed by officer reports, lead us to conclude that the PRM initiative is gradually changing people's attitudes with individuals beginning to display a sense of community responsibility and taking ownership of their areas, rather than looking to the Council for solutions
- 2.2 As part of our review, we have re-visited the work being undertaken in the pilot area and followed up the progress of the recommendations from our earlier review. We have found that the latter have, largely, been progressed and are particularly pleased that resources have been built into the Council's Medium Term Capital Budget Strategy (MTCBS) to address the long-standing infrastructure problems on a phased basis. We consider that this is critical for the sustainability of the project. We await receipt of the first of the regular performance monitoring reports to be submitted to scrutiny, which we understand is to commence in the autumn cycle of meetings. We would recommend that officers continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of our pilot review.
- 2.3 The results of the March 2004 Local Environmental Quality Survey (LEQS) for South Harrow showed that significant progress had been made; the predicted results had, nevertheless, not been achieved in all areas. 7 of the 22 LEQS measures had been achieved in the pilot area with a further 14 generally significantly exceeding the acceptable target although not achieving the targets set for the 'high' standards. The performance in relation to the completion of lighting repairs is of particular concern, some issues arising from the undertaking of sub-contracted work. We have been advised that officers are actively working more closely with the contractor to address these concerns. The inclusion of appropriate safeguards in all future contracts is an issue which we recommend the Executive give stringent consideration.
- 2.4 We understand that the original targets had been based on results obtained in the central area, which is cleaned daily, and have now been revised to what officers suggest are more realistic standards. Based upon our visual inspection of the area and positive public and Ward Member feedback, together with the fact that the revised targets still fall within the Government's acceptable levels, we feel that the officer view that the original targets set were over-optimistic is supportable. In reaching this conclusion, we have also taken into account the concerns of some of members of the public that Value for Money is achieved and our own view that there is a need to ensure that long-term targets are balanced against VFM. The national recognition won by the pilot, as evidenced by the gaining of a number of awards, supports our conclusion that good standards are still being reached. We recognise that the autumn MORI resident satisfaction results are not as positive as we would have hoped. As indicated in our main report, we believe this may be due to a number of factors and expect that the results of the next survey, which is to be commissioned next year, will show a marked improvement as the roll out continues. We will, of course, be monitoring these results very closely.
- 2.5 Within the pilot area, we are greatly encouraged by the signs of further development of area working and joint approaches, particularly in relation to the community school pilots and the community safety working with the Police. We also found evidence of a welcome holistic approach to PRM, through, for example the careful attention being paid to the planting of appropriate replacement trees with a view to addressing future maintenance issues. We hope that the positive learning experiences will be shared across the Council.
- 2.6 Progress is still needed in relation to bringing the grounds maintenance standards of housing land up to the general PRM level but we recognise the complexities of the funding arrangements around the Housing Revenue Account. We question the historical basis by which the grounds maintenance costs of housing land is charged to the HRA and would recommend that consideration is given to the alternative options

which may be available, including the possible transfer of some areas away from specific housing ownership. We hope that a satisfactory solution to this matter will be reached now that the ALMO is established.

- 2.7 With regard to implementation in the roll out Areas, we believe that the roll out to Area 2 has been a success and is supported by increased Police presence and the deployment of the CPSOs. Although it may be too early to assess the success of the roll out to Area 3, the evidence that we have seen is that this is similarly promising.
- 2.8 We understand that the Area Teams consider that the challenging infrastructure problems in the Central Area are now largely under control. We believe that the decision not to roll out the project further until this had been achieved was wise, thereby minimising potential capacity problems.
- 2.9 Overall, the LEQS results show that there has been an improvement in standards, with a notable improvement in responsive highway maintenance service. Whilst the 2003-04 street cleaning results showed an overall improvement in comparison to 2000-01, this was not as significant as might have been expected. It has been suggested that this may be due to the small size of the sample and the timing of the survey, which was undertaken at an early stage of the project. We have been assured that the results are still within the Government's targets and, if progress continues as expected, these targets will be comfortably met by the end of the year. By the time the 2004-05 survey is undertaken, the PRM initiative will have been rolled out to a significant proportion of the Borough. We will, therefore, be looking for a marked improvement in the LEQS results and, in the meantime, recommend vigilant monitoring of performance standards, with regular reports, by street, being submitted to Ward Councillors and members of the review group.
- 2.10 Our personal experience, supported by reports we have received, has been of positive contact with Call Centre staff, with knowledgeable responses being given. We feel, however, that the follow-up process to action calls requires strengthening, still being dependent upon manual systems. We appreciate that ICT needs are due to be addressed as part of the First Contact initiative and that the identification of a strategic partner for the Council is being progressed. We would urge that this area of work continues to be prioritised.
- 2.11 The area residents' newsletters are a positive and successful way of communicating information and engaging with the local communities. The newsletters are currently not delivered to business premises although we feel that inclusion of local business premises within the distribution would help in improving knowledge and ownership of the project amongst local businesses. With regard to partnership working with the business community good progress is being made in the town centre areas although there appears to be a particular need to strengthen progress in this field in Area 3. During our review, we were grateful to receive an offer of specific help from a member of the business community and would urge the establishment of a procedure for any similar offers of assistance from business or local communities to be communicated effectively across all parts of the Authority.
- 2.12 We saw a number of examples of successful partnership working and were particularly impressed with the progress being made in collaborative working with the Police, which includes some joint planning and funding.
- 2.13 We were also impressed with the highly committed and motivated approach of the staff whom we met, both at management and at front-line levels. The staff on the ground were clearly gaining considerable job satisfaction from their work and welcomed the opportunity to learn and use new skills. The public wish to engage with us, as Members, during our inspection tour suggested to us the community's acceptance of, and trust in, the local area team. There have been some examples of successful community outreach, for example in the identification of, and planning for, the needs of elderly African Caribbeans and in the provision of a cricket pitch in Roxeth Park for the specific use of young people.

- 2.14 This ability to address local needs, now strengthened through joint working with the Community Schools initiative, is, of course, central to the concept of area working. We noted that further work is needed to engage Harrow Town Centre residents, where perhaps the resident profile is such that new strategies will need to be devised to encourage community ownership of the project and its aims. The establishment of the Community Schools pilot will hopefully facilitate positive joint working in this area, particularly in relation to Youth Diversionary activities which appear to be a particular need. We would urge the Area Team to explore and examine any best practice examples of town centre outreach work undertaken in other Local Authorities to identify any potential lessons which could be learnt.
- 2.15 We identified issues for area team staff around enforcement, with the powers of front line staff being limited. Increased planning enforcement and legal services support would greatly strengthen the ability of the area team in dealing with persistent offenders. We would, therefore, ask the Executive to review the adequacy of the support which is currently available in these areas in the light of the changed demands arising from the NHP.
- 2.16 Our discussions with the Portfolio holder and officers has led us to agree that the incorporation of Grounds Maintenance services into consolidated PRM maintenance arrangements is likely to be a major challenge. We would urge the Executive to give careful consideration to maintaining effective communications with staff on these issues and to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to involve staff.
- 2.17 On a broader front, our own experiences and those of other Councillors has been that residents in areas currently outside the roll out are generally not engaged in the NHP. Many of these residents, however, recognise the benefits of the NHP approach to PRM and wish to see some of these benefits coming to them pending roll out to their areas. We would recommend that further consideration is given to ways to publicising further the raising of PRM standards in all non roll out shopping (and residential) areas.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Regular monitoring reports of cleanliness, by street, to be submitted to Ward Members and copied to Review Group for the next 12 months.
2. The distribution of the area newsletters is extended to businesses and consideration is given to the options for improving communications with business communities in NHP areas, particularly in Kenton, whether through the existing newsletter or alternative means of communication.
3. The Executive consider establishing procedures to ensure that any offers of assistance from business/local communities are communicated effectively across the Authority.
4. The Executive consider measures to improve communications around the project with those outside the roll out areas and to publicise the timescale for the roll out to the remaining areas, together with the measures already implemented to improve PRM standards in non NHP areas.
5. Enforcement best practices in other Local Authorities are identified and consideration is given to strengthening the support available to area team staff in addressing issues of enforcement, particularly from planning & legal services.
6. Work to engage the Harrow Town Centre community, particularly in relation to Youth diversionary activities, is prioritised and draws upon the review of relevant best practices in other Authorities.
7. When entering into new contracts with existing or new contractors, ensure that adequate safeguards are built into the contract to ensure the Council exercises appropriate control over sub-contractors and in relation to future roll-out areas seek where possible to ensure such controls are available in the case of variations of existing contracts or entering into new ones.
8. The establishment of new ICT provision, which is particularly critical to the effective communications between the call centre, frontline staff and managers as well as to the introduction of efficient performance monitoring process, continues to be expedited.
9. The potential challenges associated with the incorporation of Grounds Maintenance services into consolidated PRM maintenance arrangements & the soft market testing of future roll out area(s) is prioritised and the Executive gives careful consideration to maintaining effective communications with staff on these issues and to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to involve staff.
10. The Executive gives consideration to the historical way in which the grounds maintenance costs of housing land is charged to the HRA and to the alternative options which may be available, including the possible transfer of some areas away from specific housing ownership.



## **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The meeting of the Review Group held on 3 February 2004 agreed its methodology for the review. This was later adapted to allow the presentation of further information requested by the Group. The methodology followed comprised:

### **3 February 2004**

- Pre-scoping meeting

### **10 March 2004**

- Presentation by Project Leader and meeting with Portfolio Holder

### **11 March 2004**

- Inspection Tour

### **19 March 2004**

- Report back findings

### **23 March 2004**

- Meeting with Deloitte and Touche

### **6 May 2004**

- Meeting with Chief Inspector of Community Policing

### **19 May 2004**

- Meeting with Portfolio Holder and Area Director

## 5. SCOPE OF CASE STUDY

### CASE STUDY 2 – PUBLIC REALM MAINTENANCE – AREAS 2&3

1	<b>SCOPE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards of ‘Street Scene’ maintenance achieved against targets and residents’ needs</li> <li>Integration of other services, including People First Services, into NHP and outcomes of measures implemented.</li> <li>Increase in the level of resident involvement and overall satisfaction achieved in Areas 2&amp;3</li> <li>Effectiveness of the plans/infrastructure put into place to support ongoing maintenance of standards in Areas 2&amp;3</li> <li>Effects of roll out to Areas 2&amp;3 on service standards in other areas</li> <li>Evaluation of the options for further roll out of Public Realm Maintenance across the Borough &amp; cost/benefits of so doing</li> </ul>
2	<b>LEAD MEMBERS</b>	Cllr Blann, supported by Cllrs Ann Groves & Vina Mithani. Other Ward Members to be agreed
3	<b>WORKSTREAM SPONSOR</b>	Tony Lear, Exec Director (Urban Living)
4	<b>ACCOUNTABLE MANAGER</b>	Andrew Trehern, Area Director (Urban Living)
5	<b>SUPPORT OFFICER</b>	Scrutiny Officer
6	<b>EXTERNAL INPUT</b>	Residents, local commercial & other stakeholders, Ward Councillors, partner agencies
7	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation by Project Manager on the operation of Areas 2&amp;3 &amp; evaluation of performance against targets</li> <li>Analysis of feedback from customer feedback cards in Areas 2&amp;3</li> <li>Invite feedback comments directly to scrutiny, using NHP Newsletter</li> <li>Inspection tour of areas</li> <li>Discussions with Project Steering Group &amp; key officers, working both directly on project &amp; in other service areas, including children and learning services</li> <li>Meeting with residents &amp; local stakeholders</li> <li>Discussions with local community groups &amp; partner bodies</li> <li>Informal liaison with NHP Panel &amp; Ward Councillors</li> </ul>
8	<b>ASSUMPTIONS/ CONSTRAINTS</b>	<p>Pilots will be sufficiently embedded within timescale to allow interim evaluation</p> <p>Members determine and lead on the review, supported by officers to the level of resource indicated in the project plan</p> <p>Resources of Members, Departmental officers and Scrutiny Unit</p>
9	<b>SCRUTINY RESOURCE COMMITMENTS</b>	<p>All Review Group Members 8 days</p> <p>Cllrs Blann – additional 4 days</p> <p>Scrutiny Unit 12 days 03-04</p>

		Scrutiny unit resources to be proactively managed, with flexible deployment, pooling of resources and re-allocation of any 'spare' resources wherever possible
10	<b>TIMESCALE</b>	Interim report April 2004 (provisional) Final report Sept 2004
11	<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Cllr Blann supported by Scrutiny Officer

## 6. KEY FINDINGS

ISSUE	EVIDENCE SOURCE	FINDINGS	COMMENT
<b>South Harrow Pilot Progress &amp; Update</b>	Presentation of Area Director  Best value Inspection – Stage 2	Overall, standards in the South Harrow Pilot area (Area 1) have been maintained since the roll out to Areas 2&3. Soft maintenance standards continue to improve whilst infrastructure improvements are being addressed through the capital programme	
	Inspection Tour	<p>The March 2004 LEQS survey of South Harrow, which was a random survey, shows that significant progress had been made although the predicted results had not been achieved in all areas. The original targets for the survey had been based on the results obtained in the central area and the anticipated capital spend in the whole of the pilot area. Implementation experience had shown that the use of the standards for the central area, which was cleaned daily, was had been over optimistic. Capital spend in the South Harrow area had also taken longer to bring on stream than envisaged, which had the effect of slowing down the elimination of some of the infrastructure problems.</p> <p>Satisfactory standards had been achieved in 7 of the 22 measures (fly tipping, leaf fall, staining, graffiti, paved area obstruction, litterbin cleansing and condition).</p> <p>Although the channel obstruction work exceeded the high standard target, all the other standards for this activity were below target.</p>	Visual inspection of the area and public feedback indicate that an acceptable standard has generally been achieved and suggest that the officer view of an over-optimistic standard was supportable.

ISSUE	EVIDENCE SOURCE	FINDINGS	COMMENT
		<p>Overall, the remaining 14 measures did not achieve the high standard target expected but generally significantly exceeded the acceptable target.</p> <p>Significantly below standard results were returned in relation to channel obstructions, post &amp; lampposts and litterbins (fill).</p> <hr/> <p>In comparison with January 2003, there had been an overall marked decrease in relation to the incidence of below standard/urgent action required and an increase in high and acceptable standard activity.</p> <hr/> <p>Project has helped to build a community that now takes pride in its area. Some innovative schemes observed including examples of community involvement in removing litter &amp; paying for road resurfacing &amp; gating.</p> <p>Staff continue to be dedicated &amp; motivated, taking pride in their work.</p> <hr/> <p>Recommendations from scrutiny's review of the pilot have largely been progressed, with further action identified for this current year.</p>	

ISSUE	EVIDENCE SOURCE	FINDINGS	COMMENT
		<p>Partnership working is continuing to develop well eg Shaftesbury Circle, Petts Hill and Brooke Avenue initiatives involving other local agencies, particularly the Police; neighbouring Authorities; local businesses, community &amp; residents groups; statutory undertakers; national service providers (e.g. Transport for London &amp; Network Rail). An inter Directorate, inter Agency Project Team has been established</p> <p>The establishment of a number of residents &amp; traders' associations has been facilitated by the project team.</p> <p>Timely decisions being sought on future area rollouts.</p> <p>Mechanisms put in place to share learning experiences</p> <p>Capital expenditure has been assessed &amp; is being addressed through MTCBS. Consideration being given to further partner opportunities with the Living Spaces fund.</p> <p>Work undertaken on agreeing sensible boundaries between NHP maintained areas and housing land. Service standards within housing areas will be managed by ALMO &amp; are agreed in consultation with tenants &amp; leaseholders who meet the costs via rental and maintenance payments.</p>	<p>ALMO needs to look at standards of maintenance of housing land.</p>

ISSUE	EVIDENCE SOURCE	FINDINGS	COMMENT
		<p>Regular progress updating reports, including on KPIs, to be submitted to scrutiny. ASB database of problems &amp; complaints reported to Portfolio holders</p> <p>Performance on street lighting repairs had slipped in the pilot area. Problems had been experienced with the 3 companies who undertake the work, sometimes through sub-contracting. Consideration being given to ways of working more closely with the contractor and at the overall contract for maintenance</p>	<p>Mechanism now in place to ensure regular progress reporting to scrutiny</p> <p>Essential to continue exploring ways to improve working with existing contractors &amp; to consider re-consider basis of contract when re-letting &amp; if possible prior to roll out to further areas</p>
		<p>Identified successes in New Ways of Working are being rolled out to other areas.</p> <p>Good progress also being made on embedding training and development programme into a formal plan. Formal training plan now set up &amp; running for Refuse Department</p>	
		<p>Work underway on health &amp; safety issues. Risk assessment template established for Parks &amp; Open Spaces. Risk assessments to cover all other PRM areas &amp; an integrated "Lone Working" policy to be developed in 2004/05.</p>	
		<p>Effective benchmarking with other Boroughs is being undertaken.</p>	
		<p>Commitment &amp; morale of workforce strengthened even further from original visit to pilot.</p>	

<p><b>Overview of roll out to areas 2 &amp; 3</b></p>	<p>Interviews with PH, Area Director</p> <p>Documentary evidence</p> <p>Inspection tour, discussions with police, evaluation of documentary evidence</p>	<p>PH reported that roll out was going well in Areas 2 &amp; 3, with work being satisfactory. Central area was proving particularly difficult to bring up to standard but this had been recognised at an early stage. Past under investment in infrastructure had compounded problems of deep cleaning in some residential roads to the town centre standard. Area 2 profile had proved very similar to that of South Harrow.</p> <p>Area Director reported that considerable inroads had been made with significant improvements having been made to the infrastructure, cleanliness, removal of graffiti, fly posting, and dumped rubbish across the whole area. Positive feedback had been received from the IDeA peer review follow up and from the AC second stage inspection of NHP. The project had gained national recognition, as demonstrated by the receipt of three national awards</p> <p>Members observed a cleaner &amp; litter free environment being maintained and improved by a well-motivated and committed workforce. Ward Councillors generally supported this view. Public feedback had been positive although some concerns were expressed about VFM.</p> <p>Overall, the environmental changes had had a positive effect on crime (e.g. cutting hedges, appropriate re-planting).</p> <p>Environmental standards were good and generally met LEQS standards.</p> <p>The roll out had been undertaken without detriment to the standards in Area 1</p> <p>Good partnership working was being developed , particularly with the Police.</p> <p>Community involvement was being promoted although further work was needed to make inroads in involving residents in the central area.</p>	
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<p><b>Environmental standards achievements against targets &amp;</b></p>	<p>Inspection tour</p> <p>Documentary evidence</p> <p>Ward Councillor feedback</p> <p>Discussions with project team</p>	<p>In NHP area, LEQS standards are used to measure a range of PRM functions. The March 2004 LEQ survey results show significant progress has been made although predicted results were not achieved in all areas.</p> <p>LEQS targets for cleaning and weed growth for South Harrow have been revised as the first year's experience had shown that the original targets were too high. Service programmes were now being tweaked to identify optimal service flows/structure. Deloitte were not concerned at the reduction in standard.</p> <p>Infrastructure targets 11-15 had also been revised although all Grade 4+ work had been ordered by March 2004 and since completed.</p>	<p>VFM long term targets need to be balanced against standards achieved</p>
		<p>Borough wide street cleaning indices for 2003-04 show some decrease in the incidence of level C&amp;D standards &amp; a decrease in the high standard (level A. Improvement trend since 2000-01 is not as significant as might have been expected in the light of NHP, possibly due to very small sample size of 12 streets making the effect of the NHP still fairly limited.</p> <p>Street cleaning standard reached, however, is within the Government's acceptable level. Results for first 2 tranches of BVPI 199 data collection were disappointing although tranche 3 results had improved significantly. If trend continues, Government target, which allows 30% of results to be below Grade B would be achieved comfortably.</p> <p>The clearance rate for fly tipping had improved in comparison with 2001-02.</p> <p>Improved trends of reported incidents of litter &amp; graffiti in Wealdstone following roll out of NHP</p>	<p>Street cleaning standards need to continue to be monitored. 2004-05 results expected to improve significantly as PRM rolls out to other NHP areas</p>

	<p>Responsive highway maintenance performance improved significantly in 2003-04 in comparison to 2002-03. On time completion of P1 (more urgent) and P2 (less urgent) repairs increased from 75% and 41% to 86.9% and 83% respectively. LEQS intervention levels are equal to or improve on levels worked outside NHP areas.</p>	
	<p>Fortnightly residential cleaning and dedicated town centre team with night crew working until 10pm has provided a welcome 'visible presence'</p>	
	<p>Project has been recognised nationally &amp; received a number of national awards, including Local Government Management Network – Top Team 2003, ENCAMS – Best Local Environment Quality Initiative 2003 and Association of Public Service Excellence Best Sustainability and Environmental Improvement Initiative 2004.</p>	
	<p>Chewing gum continues to be a problem</p> <p>Particular problems in Harrow Town centre after school hours. Litter in Town centre has increased whilst other works are underway – possibly encouraged by visual disruption</p>	<p>Need to continue to seek resident involvement in Harrow Town centre</p>
	<p>Overhanging trees from private residences pruned back for safety reasons on single pass roads.</p> <p>Trees replaced as required with appropriate trees for the environment – less root disturbance, leaf fall etc</p>	

		<p>Significant infrastructure investment has taken place in parks with Kenton Rec. &amp; Queensbury parks much improved</p> <p>PRM teams are responsible for all aspects of quality of service delivery, even in areas maintained by Service team. Issues exist in some places associated with contractors' work &amp; need to be addressed.</p> <p>Initiatives started on developing user groups &amp; options for encouraging use by young people</p>	Tight specification needed for new Grounds Maintenance Contract to address issues of differing standards
<b>Financial implications</b>	<p>Interview with PH</p> <p>Documentary evidence</p> <p>MTBS</p>	<p>Total PRM Areas 1-6 revenue budgets are £4,474,000 for 2004/05. £7,691,000 has been included in the PRM MTRB for Areas 1-9 in 2005-06, this figure representing the part-year effects for Areas 7-9.</p> <p>The NHP PRM capital budgets include £2,207.8k for 2004-05, £1,500k for 2005-06 and £1,500k for 2006-07.</p> <p>Significant economies of scale anticipated from roll out to other areas. The projected £3m of economies of scale by 2006 was believed to be robust.</p> <p>Also possibility of associated 'knock on' savings through improved infrastructure &amp; maintenance e.g. Camden's Boulevard Project delivered a reduction in insurance claims from £400k to zero in a 3 year period</p> <p>Businesses are charged for services wherever appropriate, generating additional income. Plans exist to maximise income through charging for cleaning &amp; removal of graffiti as now allowed under Anti Social Behaviour Act.</p>	

		<p>Work is underway on comparing pre-NHP PRM with current provision, broken down to 9 NHP areas, for comparison against CIPFA data. Audit commission unable to provide comparative costing data form other Authorities but expect Harrow to prove VFM in order to achieve 2* rating.</p>	<p>Decision to undertake market testing of some future roll out Areas appears necessary to meet AC requirements but could also have risks for the project</p>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>Interviews with PH &amp; Area Director</p> <p>MTBS</p> <p>Documentary evidence</p>	<p>Overall, NHP roll out should be sustainable via MTBS &amp; MTCBS although the re-tendering of the Grounds Maintenance Contract was a potential risk progress in the roll out was in line with the Corporate Plan. The particular challenges of Area 2 had led to the decision only to proceed once they were under control. 3 areas are due to be rolled out in 2005-06. Work on this would need to start earlier to enable procurement to develop the specification for market testing.</p> <p>In 2003-04 planned highways maintenance budget was £912k for footways and £317k for carriageways. UKPMS Surveys of structural defects show a continuing deterioration in the condition of the Borough's roads. Latest survey is expected to show that 28% of the non principal network is below the national intervention level. Officers estimate that the budget needs to be increased by £750 k each year over the next 10 years to address the backlog of maintenance. The hope was to achieve national standards within 7 years; improved borrowing provision was expected to assist this aim. As part of area service delivery, improvements were to be customer driven and focussed.</p> <p>Principal road network maintenance funding is subject to funding bids to TfL, with reasonable settlements having been made in the past.</p> <p>£100k has been allowed for each NHP area for cosmetic repairs.</p>	<p>Sufficient resources have been included in MTCBS to address the need for planned maintenance on a phased basis</p> <p>Adequate revenue provision has been built into MTBS for roll out</p> <p>Welcome increased resources, which are essential if NHP is to be effectively sustained</p>

		<p>Increased provision for PRM capital works (including street lighting) had been included in MTCBS which should be sufficient to address issues through a planned programme.</p> <p>Funding for lighting improvements has been included in the MTCBS for a 3 year programme to replace the concrete column stock across the whole Borough with new high performance lighting. Steel columns within NHP roll out areas are being repainted as part of the PRM rollout. The lighting infrastructure would ultimately be to a high standard, with all low standard lighting removed.</p> <p>Smarter working being introduced throughout Urban Living to support co-ordinated &amp; effective planned maintenance across all PRM services.</p>	Introduction of smarter working commended
<b>Performance management systems</b>	Presentation from Area Director	<p>LEQ survey methodology being used to monitor performance &amp; identify required action. Call centre logging system has been revised to improve statistical information. KPIs tracked monthly.</p> <p>GIS &amp; costs of crime analysis developed for specific hot spots &amp; quarterly reporting to Safer Harrow Management Group introduced.</p> <p>Monitoring is operative but still paper based. Call centre staff follow up complaints to ensure action taken.</p> <p>Further work is now being undertaken on reviewing &amp; strengthening performance management &amp; control procedures, with target date of April 2005 for implementing improvements.</p> <p>Effective process for logging contact from the public being introduced</p>	<p>Strengthening performance management system through High Performing Harrow needs to be prioritised &amp; ICT system introduced at an early date</p> <p>Review Group members &amp; Ward Councillors in roll out areas should be provided with monitoring information broken down by individual streets</p>

<p><b>Customer satisfaction</b></p>	<p>Inspection tour</p> <p>Member contact with public</p> <p>Meeting with WAC</p> <p>Meeting with ward Councillors</p>	<p>Members of the public generally have noticed a cleaner, litter-free environment with less graffiti</p> <p>Some residents have concerns re VFM</p> <p>WAC reported positively on the area team's prompt resolution of issues</p> <p>Positive responses to road closure programme from residents</p> <p>Noticeable differences in standards on ward boundaries – commented on by residents in adjoining Boroughs</p>	
<p><b>Community Safety Services &amp; Wealdstone Project</b></p>	<p>Feedback from residents &amp; resident associations to members</p>	<p>First community policing team introduced in April 2004 &amp; operate on high-level visibility. 4-year roll out programme of community policing agreed with police, who meet regularly with Council &amp; local businesses.</p> <p>Good partnership working with Police through established groups &amp; jointly agreed funding, targets &amp; plans</p> <p>Residents Associations in Central Harrow appear to have a reduced fear of crime but have reported increases in car dumping</p> <p>Kenton residents have reported increase in burglaries &amp; car thefts – alleged to be related to the presence of Travellers</p> <p>Generally, increased presence of beat officers welcomed</p> <p>Apparent &amp; reported increase in civic awareness in NHP areas</p> <p>Noted decrease in youth offending, resulting in cancellations of court sittings</p>	

<p><b>Partnership working</b></p>	<p>Inspection tour</p> <p>Presentation by Area Director</p>	<p>Embankment on corner of Cecil Road is problematic</p> <p>Significant partnership working continues, particularly with the Police (see below)</p> <p>Considerable work with the Crime Prevention Officer on measures to improve community safety through grounds maintenance – ego cutting down bushes, replanting brick planters &amp; shrubberies with low level bedding &amp; shrubs.</p> <p>Good joined up response from Police, Street wardens &amp; shopkeepers to the concerns caused by beggars around the Goodwill PH</p> <p>Inter-Departmental working being employed to address use of land being Sam McGuire's PH in Wealdstone &amp; prevention of degeneration of Town Centre Post Office site</p> <p>Air quality work is being cited as national good practice.</p> <p>Partnership working will be further facilitated on completion on MMR &amp; relocation of officers to new Directorates</p> <p>Constructively working with other parts of the Council to identify ways in which youth facilities &amp; community safety can be addressed in the roll out (e.g. funding for young Person's 'Drop In' at the new Youth &amp; Community development in Wealdstone; Wealdstone Project; Area team street wardens work with local schools; operation of CCTV van &amp; automatic number plate recognition system; Rayners Lane Community Safety project; use of Community safety Trailer as a mobile Drugs Education Unit at community events). Range of further initiatives planned for 2004/05.</p>	<p>Need to enlist help of partner bodies in addressing this issue.</p> <p>Bridgens offer of using their specialist knowledge &amp; skills in assisting Council on land near railways should be accepted.</p> <p>Opportunities for other local businesses to support the Council through similar specialist input could be investigated. Important to develop procedures to share any offers of assistance across the organisations</p>
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<b>Resident involvement/ Community development</b>	Inspection tour Discussions with Area Director	<p>The residents' newsletters are an attractive and effective tool for communicating with the local population. Consideration being given to alternative communication strategy to engage residents from Central Area, where interest has been low as well as more effective general publicity strategies.</p> <p>Town Centre &amp; Wealdstone businesses are being engaged by the Town Centre Manager – need to address engagement of Kenton traders</p> <p>Main interest of residents has been improved policing, wardens in parks, street lighting &amp; cleanliness</p> <p>Residents keen to engage Members on inspection tour – possibly indicative of public confidence in workforce in area</p> <p>Town Centre survey had been undertaken at the Community Strategy event but results had yet to be analysed</p>	<p>Extension of distribution of newsletters to local businesses would help to keep businesses in touch with developments and encourage their involvement</p> <p>Resources to analyse surveys need to be identified before they are undertaken</p>
		<p>Some work undertaken on St Lukes Hospice on request, although just outside the Borough boundary</p> <p>Shaftesbury Circle &amp; Kenton Lane initiatives provide good example of involvement resulting in an empowered community</p> <p>Community involvement has been slow in Town Centre, where tackling dereliction has been initial priority.</p> <p>Good involvement of schools in Area 3, with evidence reported of change in anti-social behaviour pattern</p> <p>Additional recycling officers being recruited to improve street cleaning &amp; refuse integration</p>	<p>Need to continue efforts to involve Town Centre residents, possibly through partnership working</p>



		<p>Staff continue to be active in encouraging and supporting other forms of user involvement (e.g. social activities for older ethnic minority residents in Wealdstone) &amp; work with schools on citizen development through environmental, litter &amp; graffiti removal initiatives, which are being rolled out to other areas.</p> <p>Good Business awards introduced for effective &amp; efficient waste handling</p>	
<p><b>Anti-Social Behaviour/</b></p> <p><b>Outcomes on criminality</b></p>		<p>Reports that dedicated resource introduced in all parks (some on a part-time basis) has supported some reduction in criminality – less damage to property, reduction in graffiti &amp; anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Evidence of positive work by Wealdstone Street wardens in Byron park, where criminality has been significantly reduced.</p> <p>Similarly, overall environmental work e.g. in clearing areas is reported to have positive effect on reducing crime</p> <p>Particular problems of St Ann's pedestrian precinct being used for skateboarding out of school hours</p> <p>Some success in Kentons area in changing pattern of anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Partnership working needed to address alternative provision/ youth diversionary activities in Town Centre</p>
<p><b>Enforcement</b></p>	<p>Meeting with Wealdstone Active Community</p> <p>Presentation from Area Director</p> <p>Inspection tour</p>	<p>WAC identified wish for more robust approach to enforcement</p> <p>Area team officers enforce street standards as part of their duties - example of removal of goods deposited on carriageway witnessed on inspection tour. Secondary stage of enforcement needs to be strengthened</p>	<p>Need to address issues of enforcement by legal and planning staff</p>

	<p>Interview with PH</p> <p>Interview with Area Director</p>	<p>Grounds Maintenance contract, currently shared by Contract Services &amp; Service team, was due to expire towards the end of 2005. The services are being incorporated within the consolidated PRM maintenance arrangements and would be subject to the comparative exercise which will be undertaken prior to the Stage 3 audit inspection; this would be a potential challenge</p> <p>A commitment had been made to soft market test services in some future roll out areas, this being necessary to demonstrate VFM for the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the AC inspection. BV principles would be applied.</p> <p>The strengthening of enforcement was a further challenge which was already starting to be addressed. Consideration was being given to support for front line enforcement action, where necessary.</p> <p>Youth diversionary activities also need to be developed and would be tackled as part of the Youth &amp; Community Services strategy, which was being re-launched with additional Government funding. This would include the installation of teenage shelter &amp; friendly zones in parks</p> <p>16 vulnerabilities had been identified &amp; were to be addressed through action plan</p> <p>Key issues included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening of enforcement – support beyond front line</li> <li>• Development of unit, inclusion possibility of employing a specialist legal resource on a short-term basis</li> </ul>	
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<b>Workforce</b>		<p>Staff well motivated, enthusiastic &amp; committed. Positive feedback from the public contributes to staff satisfaction</p> <p>Cleaning staff are now team led &amp; multi-skilled, On-going training provided on use of machinery &amp; equipment.</p> <p>NHP team won Best Local Environmental Quality Initiative at the People &amp; Places Conference.</p>	
		<p>Career paths were being developed for staff and were supported by positive and targeted advertising and high levels of job satisfaction. There had been no recruitment problems to date -experience had shown that staff were keen to join the workforce.</p> <p>PH accepted that if Areas 7-9 were awarded to external contractors as a result of market testing this could be a demotivating effect to staff but stressed that the market testing was an AC requirement to demonstrate VFM.</p>	<p>Job opportunities could be promoted at school career events</p> <p>Given some of the public feedback received by members, soft market testing was a valid way to demonstrate VFM</p>
<b>Impact on public outside NHP roll out areas</b>	Member contact with public	Residents outside NHP areas are keen to be included in the roll-out	

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>AC</b>	Audit Commission
<b>ALMO</b>	Arms Length Management Organisation - the body which will be taking over the responsibility for the management of the Council's housing stock
<b>ASB</b>	Anti-Social Behaviour
<b>BV</b>	Best Value - a duty to deliver services to clear standards – covering both cost and quality – by the most effective, economic and efficient means available.
<b>CPSO</b>	Community Police Support Officer
<b>DAT</b>	Drug Action Team – the part of the Council responsible for addressing drug related issues
<b>GIS</b>	Geographical Information System – tool used in analysis
<b>H&amp;S</b>	Health & Safety
<b>HRA</b>	Housing Revenue Account
<b>ICT</b>	Information Communication Technologies
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator – sets standard for service
<b>LEQS</b>	Local Environmental Quality Survey. These are nationally recognised service standards for Public Realm Maintenance, linked to the Capital Standards Scheme
<b>MTBS</b>	Medium Term Budget Strategy
<b>MTCBS</b>	Medium Term Capital Budget Strategy
<b>NHP</b>	New Harrow Project
<b>NWW</b>	New Ways of Working
<b>PH</b>	Portfolio holder – the Council Member responsible for the service in question
<b>PRM</b>	Public Realm Maintenance
<b>TfL</b>	Transport for London – the body accountable to the Mayor for London and responsible for most transport issues in London
<b>VFM</b>	Value for Money
<b>WAC</b>	Wealdstone Active Community